

SECRET
REGISTRY COPY

TO : COPS
FROM : [] FBW
SUBJECT: Johannes BERNHARDT

2. With Germany's engagement in World War II, SOFINUDUS assumed new importance as the official German purchasing company in Spain, where (by 1941) it controlled assets of 500 million pesetas. The firm acted under orders from the Reichsministerium in Berlin and was given access through the German Embassy to German credits and other German resources in Spain. The large-scale smuggling of wolfram out of Spain by SOFINUDUS was a major issue in U.S. and British relations with Spain during the war.

3. As managing director of SOFINDUS, Johannes BERNHARDT collaborated closely with the Sipo & SD and with the Abwehr. SOFINDUS provided cover employment for SD agents, sometimes paying a part of their salaries; it facilitated the granting of Spanish visas to Abwehr agents by promising employment, set up bank deposits (probably in Spanish names) to provide Abwehr expenses in case of a diplomatic break between Spain and Germany, and assisted the German I.S. in other ways. A specific instance was the transfer by BERNHARDT in November 1944 of 16 million pesetas from SOFINDUS to the German Embassy for the use of the RSHA (RdM Spain). In the first part of 1945 BERNHARDT collaborated

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

Declassified and Approved for Release
by the Central Intelligence Agency
Date: 08-01-2014

SECRET

- 2 -

Memo re J. BERNHARDT

21 October 1947

with the German Embassy in attempts to ship supplies to the German pockets of resistance on the French coast. BERNHARDT was also a special agent of Amt VI, responsible directly to Walter SCHELLERBERG, who exploited his high-level contacts and considered him the best Amt VI agent in Spain.

4. BERNHARDT was originally (in 1944) listed by the Allies for expulsion, but the Safehaven Committee requested that his name not be included on the later repatriation lists, since he was in a position to render valuable assistance. It was also felt by the British and American Embassies that any attempt to bring about BERNHARDT's repatriation would fail because of his intimate friendships with high Spanish authorities and their remembrance of his help during the Civil War.

5. BERNHARDT has several times been reported as the head of a post-war Nazi resistance group in Spain, and was reported in January 1947 to have held a meeting of prominent Nazis in the SOFINDUS offices.

6. All of the foregoing information is from the most reliable sources, most of it repeatedly confirmed. Unconfirmed reports indicate that BERNHARDT administered a "secret fund" of several million pesetas that he handled sizeable investments for Hermann GOERING (a personal friend), and that he has in Spain a private fortune amounting to 80 million pesetas.

7. Johannes BERNHARDT was last reported as living at Av. del Valle 3, Madrid. He is married (wife nee WILMER) and has at least three children. He held German passport no. 0156, issued at Madrid in 1940. He entered the Nazi Party in April 1933 and his Party no. was 1572619.

SECRET

BEST AVAILABLE COPY